

## Chapter 14 CASE MANAGEMENT

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### 14.1.0 ELIGIBILITY

Under W-2, cash payments are available to eligible participants who complete work, work training activities, and education and training activities in W-2 subsidized employment positions. Placement in a subsidized position is appropriate only for individuals with barriers to unsubsidized employment, as determined by the W-2 agency. However, there are several groups of individuals who, by law, are eligible only for case management services. These groups include:

1. Noncustodial Parents
2. Pregnant Women
3. Minor Parents

### 14.2.0 NONCUSTODIAL PARENTS

One of the goals of W-2 is to enable custodial parents to become self-sufficient by ensuring regular child support payments in combination with employment. For this reason, W-2 agencies should work with noncustodial parents to assist them in obtaining employment and increase their ability to make child support payments. In order to do so, under W-2, noncustodial parents may be eligible for case management services. Providing case management services to the noncustodial parent will assist them in meeting their financial obligation and facilitate enhanced contact and emotional investment with their own child(ren). FEPs should take a family case management approach with all W-2 families. Although participation in W-2 by the noncustodial parent is voluntary, FEPs should explain available noncustodial parent services to the custodial parent and give them a copy of the W-2 Fact Sheet, *Services for Noncustodial Parents (DES-10985-P)*. The agency may also consider sending a notice of available services to the noncustodial parent, encouraging contact with the FEP if interested in accessing available services. This family approach to case management helps emphasize the shared responsibility parents have in raising their children.

Case management services for noncustodial parents are a key component of the W-2 program and also support the guiding principles of the Children First program. Agencies who desire to strengthen the services provided to the noncustodial parent may choose to participate in the Children First program. Both the Children First program and the case management services to noncustodial parents provide work experience and training to unemployed and/or underemployed noncustodial parents who are unable to meet child support obligations.

While case management for services for noncustodial parents can be established with the W-2 agencies internal resources, the Children First program requires a formal partnership between the contracting agency, the Child Support Agency, the employment and training provider, and the county judicial system (since it is court ordered). However, the intent of the services offered through both of these programs is to motivate noncustodial parents to pay child support by assisting them in locating employment and to support their involvement in their children's lives.

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**14.2.1 Eligibility - Noncustodial Parents**

Participation in W-2 by the noncustodial parent is voluntary and may not interfere with placement of custodial parents in required work activities.

**14.2.1.1 Nonfinancial**

The following nonfinancial criteria must be met:

1. The custodial parent is participating in W-2; and
2. The noncustodial parent must:
  - a. Be 18 years of age or older;
  - b. Be a U.S. citizen or qualified alien;
  - c. Be a resident of Wisconsin and unless the NCP is a migrant worker, demonstrate an intent to continue living in the state. To be eligible, the NCP is not required to have resided in Wisconsin for any specified length of time. (See the Income Maintenance Manual, Chapter 1, Part C for methods of residency verification);
  - d. Cooperate in efforts to establish paternity of the dependent child(ren) and secure and enforce child support orders;
  - e. Provide all requested documentation within seven working days after receiving the request for information from the W-2 agency;
  - f. Have made a good faith effort, as determined by the W-2 agency on a case-by-case basis, to obtain employment and have not refused any bona fide offer of employment within 180 days immediately preceding application;
  - g. Have cooperated with the efforts of the W-2 agency to assist the individual to obtain employment if the last W-2 application was within 180 days immediately preceding the current application;
  - h. Not receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or state supplemental payments;
  - i. Not receive Social Security Disability Income (SSDI);
  - j. Not participate in a strike on the last day of the month; (if eligibility is determined prior to the last day of the month and the applicant is on strike, they are ineligible; if a participant in a W-2 employment position goes on strike, they become ineligible for W-2);
  - k. Apply for or provide a social security number (SSN) for all W-2 group members;

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- l. Report changes in circumstances that may affect eligibility within 10 days after the change;
- m. Beginning on the date on which the individual has attained the age of 18, the total number of months in which the individual has actively participated in one (or a combination) of the following does not exceed 60 months:
  - The Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program;
  - A W-2 employment position; and
  - A TANF approved program in this state or another state.

The months need not be consecutive. Participation JOBS begins to count toward the 60-month limit beginning on October 1, 1996;

- n. Cooperates in applying for other public assistance programs or resources that the FEP believes may be available to the individual; and
- o. Cooperates with providing eligibility information for other members of the W-2 group.
- p. Is not a fugitive felon.
- q. Is not violating a condition of probation or parole imposed under federal or state law.
- r. The individual states in writing whether the individual has been convicted in any state or federal court of a felony that has an element of possession, use or distribution of a controlled substance.

**14.2.1.2** *Financial*

The following financial eligibility requirements must be met:

- 1. The assets of the noncustodial parent family group do not exceed \$2,500 in combined equity value.
- 2. The income of the noncustodial parent family group is at or below 115 percent of the federal poverty line.
- 3. Any vehicle equity value amount over \$10,000 must be counted as an asset to be tested against the \$2,500 limit for the asset test.

**14.2.2** **Services Available To Noncustodial Parents**

The W-2 agency may provide case management, job search assistance and/or basic skills training services to eligible noncustodial parents. Concurrently with case management, job search, and employment and training assistance, a successful program creates a balance between family and work to provide a stable environment which benefits both the child(ren) and the noncustodial parent.

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**14.2.2.1**      *Case Management*

See 7.1.1.2 and 7.1.2.1 for a list of case management activities.

**14.2.2.2**      *Job Search Assistance*

The noncustodial parent may participate in any of the activities outlined in Job Search Assistance in 5.1.2.1.

**14.2.2.3**      *Basic Skills Training*

The noncustodial parent may participate in basic skills which enhance employment opportunities, e.g. driver's education.

**14.2.2.4**      *Employment Positions*

W-2 eligible noncustodial parent(s) may participate in work training activities similar to Community Service Jobs when sufficient positions are available so as not to interfere with placement of W-2 custodial parents into W-2 employment positions. Noncustodial parents are not eligible to receive payments for participation in a Community Service Job. The 24-month time limit does not apply. All other appropriate policies established for W-2 custodial parents apply to W-2 noncustodial parents.

When considering placement into a work training activity, the case manager should replicate the W-2 employment position ladder as much as possible. In this manner, the noncustodial parent participant gains work experience as he/she moves up the ladder toward self-sufficiency.

**14.2.2.5**      *Job Access Loans*

Participants whose only participation in W-2 is as a noncustodial parent are not eligible for Job Access Loans.

**14.2.3**      **OTHER PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO NCPS**

There are three other programs that serve non-custodial parents in Wisconsin: the Children First Program, Welfare- to- Work (WtW) and Workforce Attachment and Advancement (WAA). These programs also provide case management, job search and job retention services to non-custodial parents to facilitate their entry into the unsubsidized labor market and to help them retain employment. Unsubsidized employment will increase their capacity to make consistent child support payments for the benefit of their minor children.

**14.2.3.1**      *Welfare-to-Work*

WtW provides services to eligible NCPs through Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), who work in close collaboration with W-2 agencies. Participation in WtW is

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voluntary. The WtW program is based on a work-first philosophy. Participants may receive a broad range of services in conjunction with their work activity. After eligibility determination and assessment, the NCP may be eligible for the following activities:

- Case Management and Goal Setting
- Job Readiness
- Employment Activities, such as work experience and on-the-job training
- Post-Employment Services
- Job Retention and Supportive Services (with WtW funds only if not otherwise available through W-2), such as transportation assistance and child care assistance

#### 14.2.3.2 *Workforce Attachment and Advancement (WAA) Program*

The WAA program includes NCPs as a target population for services. WAA services are provided by WDBs and W-2 agencies in all areas of the state. The service priorities for this program are advancement and job retention services, although participants may receive placement and readiness services as well as basic education. WAA offers services to NCPs to promote upward mobility and advancement to higher paying jobs. Participation is voluntary, and NCPs are eligible if their income is under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level and they have minor child(ren) (the children do not need to be low income). **Funding for the WAA program ended effective December 31, 2003.**

#### 14.2.3.3 *Children First*

The Children First program promotes the emotional and financial responsibility of the NCP to his or her children. The Children First program operates through a voluntary partnership with the W-2 agency, the child support agency, and the county/tribal judicial system. Currently there are 43 programs operating in Wisconsin that serve almost 4,000 NCPs annually.

The Children First program requires a court order mandating NCP participation in the program. The NCP may be ordered to participate in Children First if he/she has no current means of meeting a child support obligation, is behind in child support payments, and does not work full-time. The Children First program operates concurrently with the W-2 program.

The program provides, at a minimum, job search assistance, work experience, education and training opportunities, and case management services designed to assist eligible NCPs in obtaining and retaining employment. An NCP successfully completes the Children First Program when he/she pays his/her child support payment for 3 consecutive months or completes 16 weeks of employment and training activities.

### 14.3.0 **PREGNANT WOMEN**

A pregnant woman, whose pregnancy is medically verified and who is both nonfinancially and financially eligible except that she is not a custodial parent of a dependent child, is eligible for job search assistance and case management services provided by the W-2

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agency. Case management services may include making the appropriate referral to access child care or discussing employment goals for the W-2 group when the child is over 12 weeks. When the child is born, a custodial parent may receive a monthly payment of \$673 per month until the child is 12 weeks old. A pregnant woman cannot be required to participate in an employment position until the child is 12 weeks old. (See 7.5.0) There is no penalty for noncooperation with child support for a pregnant woman or while the child is less than 60 days old.

### **14.4.0 MINOR PARENTS**

#### **14.4.1 Universal Eligibility For Case Management Services**

A custodial minor parent (under the age of 18, male or female) is eligible to meet with a Financial and Employment Planner (FEP) regardless of meeting any living arrangement criteria, financial or nonfinancial eligibility requirements.

The FEP may provide a minor parent with services and information including W-2 eligibility information, available child care services, high school and school-to-work preparation, employment and financial planning, family planning services, community resources, and eligibility for food stamps, other food and nutrition programs or Medical Assistance. Eligibility determination for these other programs will be completed according to individual program eligibility rules.

#### **14.4.2 Adult Supervised Living Arrangements**

Minor parents are not independently eligible for W-2 financial assistance or employment positions. A minor parent living independently should be counseled on the importance of living in an adult-supervised living arrangement. The FEP should discuss optional living arrangements with the minor such as living with relatives, beginning with the assumption the minor parent would live with her parents.

When living with a parent or relative does not appear to be an option, a referral for the minor parent should be made to the county or tribal social/human services agency or another appropriate community based organization for assistance in finding an adult-supervised supportive living arrangement. In addition, the agency may offer assessment, counseling, or supportive services to assist families experiencing problems that can negatively impact children.

If there is reasonable cause to suspect that the minor parent or a child of the minor parent has been abused or neglected or there is reason to believe that the minor parent or a child of the minor parent has been threatened with abuse or neglect or that abuse or neglect will occur, the FEP must make a report to the child welfare agency. The agency assesses reports of alleged child abuse and neglect in accordance with state standards. In any case where the agency determines that the child is not safe and that in-home safety services would be insufficient to keep the child safe, an out-of-home placement may be necessary. In order for the agency to place a minor in an alternative living arrangement, the juvenile court must find that the child is in need of protection or

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services and that certain conditions exists, such as the child has been abused, neglected, abandoned, is in need of special care or treatment, etc.

When living with an adult parent is not in the best interests of the minor, an adult relative, caring for the minor parent, may qualify for a Kinship Care grant. When a minor turns 18, s/he may qualify for W-2 services as an adult.